

Training Guide and Template

Use the Training Guide and Template to design and deliver effective trainings that build staff skills.

Planning Trainings

Effective trainings share an essential feature: they are well planned, with carefully considered key elements and implementation details.

Objectives

- What should participants know and be able to do as a result of the training? What do they already know?
- Write objectives as specifically as possible, stating exactly what participants will learn and how you will know that they've grasped the information or skill.
- Detailed objectives help you design the training. For example, the general objective "Participants will learn about PBL" is less useful than the specific "Participants will be able to state five key elements of successful PBL."
- Consider process objectives as well. Process objectives may include building staff cohesion, encouraging leadership, and helping staff see themselves as informal educators.

Content and Time

- Use the amount of training time available to determine the amount of content to include rather than trying to cram all the content of a topic into a time slot.
- Clearly align the training content with the objectives.
- If it seems like too much content for the available time – too many new concepts or techniques, too big a leap from what participants already know, too complex – divide it into smaller parts and deliver them over two or more sessions. Adjust objectives for each session accordingly.
- All trainings should have a purposeful opening, an intensive content development component, and a closing and wrap-up.
- Allow time for a closing that includes consolidation of key points covered, implications for immediate practice, and implementation steps.

Presentation and Practice Activities

- Generate enthusiasm and interest in the training topic. If you seem bored, it will be boring!
- Know your topic and the training.
- Be sure participants know the objectives and time frame of the training.
- Organize different ways to present information and engage participants. "Ask first, then show or explain" is a good rule of thumb. For any concept, topic, idea, or technique, ask participants what they think or what they know or ask them to give examples from their experience. Then debrief or extract key elements to illustrate the points. Or you can engage participants in an activity that illustrates the point, then debrief, ask for other examples or experiences, and summarize with the main point or concept you want to establish.
- Use varied activities and groupings throughout the training to engage participants with different learning styles. For example, divide into individuals, pairs, trios, half group, or full group; request group charting and report; instigate group activity and demonstration; discuss; role-play; fishbowl; map concepts; become physically active (e.g., divide the room) or quiet. For longer trainings, pay attention to forming and mixing up groups.
- Be sure that every activity and its format help achieve the overall training objectives.

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Logistics, Setting the Stage, Materials, and Prep

- Map out your training with the template or another tool. Establish times.. Be aware that large groups and large-group activities take longer just to move people and materials around.
- Set up training materials and space in advance. Make the space as enticing as possible.
- Provide warm-up activities or materials for participants to work on, play with, or fidget with as others arrive. This models afterschool transitions!
- Make training materials attractive and easy-to-use. Have extras.
- Provide take-and-do materials that staff can use right away.
- Allocate time for breaks if the training is more than 90 minutes.

Leading Trainings

Pre-start

Create a welcoming, inclusive, and open environment; greet people, by name if possible.
Have your notes and presentation materials at hand.
Start on time.

Opening and Introductions

- Effective trainings often begin with an opening activity that relates to the training objectives and gets participants thinking, talking, and sharing experiences.
- Introduce yourself to the group; have participants introduce themselves (or each other) as needed.
- Introduce the topic; explain its importance.
- Ask about and connect the topic with participant experiences, successes, and challenges.
- Tweak training emphases and timing based on participant experience and feedback.

Training Content Middle

- Engage participants in new concepts or practices.
- Explain concepts and/or practices; demonstrate concepts to the group.
- Leverage participants' prior knowledge and experience.
- Provide time for participants to discuss, explore, and practice.
- Have participants apply new concepts and practices concretely and specifically to their own work, program, and youth.
- Elicit discussion of challenges and approaches to addressing challenges.
- Provide time for discussion and questions, in pairs, small groups, or full group.

Closing

- Reconnect to objectives and consolidate or recap learning from the training.
- Ask participants to reflect on their learning in some way.
- Have participants address action plans or next steps to implement or act on learning.
- Acknowledge the time and effort participants have given.
- Solicit input on the value of the training, its effectiveness, and topics for additional trainings.

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Template Tips

Topic: _____

Objectives: _____

Tip: Objectives should be clear, specific, and results-oriented. Identify clearly and specifically what you want participants to learn, know, or be able to do by the end of the training. Concrete objectives that demonstrate learning lead to better – and easier to design – trainings. Customize objectives in the Design Studio to fit your staff and program.

Total amount of time _____

Tip: Divide trainings into segments, if necessary, and map the time for each part. Trainings of more than 90 minutes – some say more than 60 minutes -- need a break.

Number of participants: _____

Preparation: _____

Materials: _____

Tip: Prepare facilitator notes as needed, think about processes such as distributing handouts, and get the space organized for the session activities.

Tip: Materials should be attractive, as high-quality as possible, and clear; include instructions where relevant. It may be worthwhile to make some reusable. Supply everything needed for all activities in sufficient quantities..

Training Opening

- Engage participants _____ minutes
(Begin with icebreaker/warm-up activity related to the topic.) _____

Tip: Do participants know each other? Would it be beneficial to use training time to also build relationships and connection? If so, use warm-ups, icebreakers and small-group activities. As much as possible, relate the icebreaker, warm-up, or transition activity to the training content.

- Introduce the topic _____ minutes
(Motivate participants, show them why the topic is important, and share objectives and agenda.) _____

Tip: The training opening is the hook. Think of it as a performance: What will engage participants' hearts and minds? You want them to care about this or they'll drift off. Link concepts to participants' interests and to their experiences. Ask what they already know. Draw on their knowledge, experience, and ideas throughout the training.

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Training Middle

___ minutes

(Explain the topic in detail, demonstrate the concept and discuss it, and practice and apply the topic.)

Tip: The middle is the heart of the training, the time when the most customization is needed to ensure that new material is aligned with program and staff needs. Guide participants in understanding the concept in practice with children and youth. Facilitate participants' independent thinking about, engagement with, and application of the concept or practice.

Tip: Break complex concepts or techniques into smaller parts or steps. Avoid rolling too many new ideas into too short a segment. Debrief, sum up, check for questions, and recap in multiconcept trainings to consolidate and reinforce along the way.

Training Wrap-up and Closing

- Summarize the topic _____ minutes
(Reconnect to the objectives, check for understanding, discuss questions.) _____

Tip: Summarize learning, ask for questions, look back at objectives. Discuss questions in full group; ask for participants' responses to questions.

- Plan next steps _____ minutes
(Be specific about application to immediate practice.) _____

Tip: Creating an action plan or listing the next two things each participant might do are good ways to wrap up. Directors can ask staff what support they'd like for implementation and how they can support one another's efforts.

- Closing comments _____ minutes
(Acknowledge, motivate, and inspire.) _____

Tip: Reinforce the importance of topic, confirm that time was well spent, and thank participants; reinforce group respect for one another and rapport.

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Quick Check for Facilitator/Trainer

To develop training skills, reflect on how the training went, think about future training topics, and note potential next steps.

Tip: Keep training plans and reviews on hand for reference and build a repertoire of trainings that work.

Topic: _____ Date: _____
 Attendees: _____

Check all that apply:

Response from participants was

- ☐ Meaningful and useful. ☐ Responsive and engaged.
☐ Respectful but neutral. ☐ Apparently bored or indifferent.
☐ Resistant to or dismissive of ideas. ☐ Other _____

The material seemed to be

- ☐ Interesting, motivating. ☐ Do-able.
☐ Understandable. ☐ Right amount, appropriate level.
☐ Irrelevant to the program and staff. ☐ Too advanced or complex.
☐ Too much for the time available. ☐ Other _____

Changes for this or other sessions:

- ☐ Add activities. ☐ Enhance prep by the facilitator.
☐ Draw more on participants' experience. ☐ Add more review, move more slowly.
☐ Incorporate more collaboration. ☐ Move faster.
☐ Other _____

Other topics to cover: _____



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Notes and next steps: _____



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